This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1 - 7. (Cancelled)

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the proportion of the pore forming material in the suspension approximately corresponds to the predetermined pore volume of the resulting sintered metal layer.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the carrier fluid comprises a binding agent liquefied in a solvent.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18 wherein pore forming materials of different densities and/or sizes are suspended in the solvent to obtain a sintered metal layer with a graded layer structure.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18 wherein the suspension is applied in many partial layers one after another on the carrier body.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 wherein each partial layer is at least partially dried before the application of the next partial layer.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 wherein each partial layer is sintered before application of the next partial layer.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18 wherein the suspension is applied to the carrier body by the process of thin layer pouring, spraying or immersing.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18 wherein the suspension is applied on at least one of the walls of a porous pipe-shaped carrier body made from sinterable material and dried, and the green layer thus formed is subsequently sintered on the carrier body.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the pipe-shaped carrier body rotates around the axis of the pipe during application of the suspension and during at least some part of the drying period.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously Presented) A method for manufacturing a thin porous layer with open porosity comprising:

applying a suspension of sinterable powder and a pore forming material in a carrier fluid in at least one layer on a carrier body;

drying said at least one layer; and

sintering said at least one layer to produce a sintered layer;

wherein:

said sinterable powder and said pore forming material, each independently, have a predeterminable particle size distribution; and

the sintered layer having a thickness corresponding to at least about three times the average diameter of the sinterable powder; a defined pore diameter between about 0.01 μm and about 50 μm and a tensile strength between about 5 and about 500 N/mm^2.

19 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 18, wherein the sinterable powder comprises metallic fibers.

20 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 19, wherein the metallic fibers are 0.1 to 250 μm in diameter.

21 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 19, wherein the metallic fibers are 1 to 50 μm in diameter.

22 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 19, wherein the metallic fibers have a length up to 500 μm.

23. (Previously Presented) A method for manufacturing a thin porous layer with open porosity comprising:

applying a suspension of sinterable powder and a pore forming material in a carrier fluid in at least one layer on a carrier body; said sinterable powder comprising metallic fibers;

drying said at least one layer; and

sintering said at least one layer to produce a sintered layer;

wherein:

said sinterable powder and said pore forming material, each independently, have a predeterminable particle size distribution; and

the sintered layer having a thickness corresponding to at least about three times the average diameter of the sinterable powder; a defined pore diameter between about 0.01 μm and about 50 μm and a tensile strength between about 5 and about 500 N/mm^2.